WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.      A method for processing a financial instrument, the method comprising:

receiving an electronic package defining an image of the financial instrument at a first institution from a presenter, the image having been generated as part of a transaction at a point of sale; and

crediting the presenter for funds in accordance with the financial instrument.

2.      The method recited in claim 1 wherein the electronic package comprises the image.

3.      The method recited in claim 1 wherein the image is stored at a location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the location.

4.      The method recited in claim 1 wherein the first institution comprises a financial institution.

5.      The method recited in claim 4 wherein the first institution comprises a bank.

6.      The method recited in claim 1 further comprising transmitting the electronic package to a second institution for recovery of the funds.

7.      The method recited in claim 6 wherein the second institution comprises a clearing institution.

8.      The method recited in claim 7 wherein the clearing institution comprises a reserve institution.

9.      The method recited in claim 6 wherein the second institution comprises a drawee financial institution, the method further comprising identifying the drawee financial institution from the electronic package.

10.     The method recited in claim 9 wherein the first institution comprises a clearing institution.

1        11.    The method recited in claim 6 wherein crediting the presenter

2  comprises provisionally crediting an account of the presenter, the method further comprising

3  releasing the credited funds after recovery of the funds.

1        12.    The method recited in claim 1 wherein the first institution comprises a

2  drawee financial institution identified by the financial instrument.

1        13.    The method recited in claim 12 wherein the presenter comprises a

2  clearing institution.

1        14.    The method recited in claim 1 wherein the image is encrypted, the

2  method further comprising decrypting the image.

1        15.    The method recited in claim 1 wherein the financial instrument

2  comprises a check.

1        16.    The method recited in claim 1 wherein the financial instrument

2  comprises a credit-card sales slip.

1        17.    A method for processing a financial instrument, the method

2  comprising:

3         generating an image of the financial instrument as part of a transaction at a

4  point of sale; and

5         transmitting an electronic package defining the image of the financial

6  instrument to an institution for recovery of funds in accordance with the financial instrument.

1        18.    The method recited in claim 17 further comprising transmitting the

2  image to a depository for storage.

1        19.    The method recited in claim 17 wherein the electronic package

2  comprises the image.

1        20.    The method recited in claim 17 wherein the image is stored at a

2  location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the location

1        21.    The method recited in claim 17 wherein the institution comprises a

2  financial institution.

1　　　　　　22.　　The method recited in claim 21 wherein the first institution comprises
2　a bank.

1　　　　　　23.　　The method recited in claim 17 wherein the financial instrument
2　comprises a check.

1　　　　　　24.　　A method for processing a financial instrument, the method
2　comprising:
3　　　　　　receiving a reference to a location in a depository where an image of the
4　financial instrument is stored; and
5　　　　　　crediting the presenter of the reference with funds in accordance with the
6　financial instrument.

1　　　　　　25.　　The method recited in claim 24 further comprising transmitting the
2　reference an institution for recovery of the funds.

1　　　　　　26.　　The method recited in claim 25 wherein the institution comprises a
2　financial institution.

1　　　　　　27.　　The method recited in claim 25 wherein the institution comprises a
2　clearing institution.

1　　　　　　28.　　The method recited in claim 24 wherein the financial instrument
2　comprises a check.

1　　　　　　29.　　The method recited in claim 24 wherein the financial instrument
2　comprises a credit-card sales slip.

1　　　　　　30.　　A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable
2　program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system for a first institution,
3　the computer system including a communications system, a processor, and a storage device,
4　wherein the computer-readable program includes instructions for operating the computer
5　system to process a financial instrument in accordance with the following:
6　　　　　　receiving an electronic package defining an image of the financial instrument
7　from a presenter with the communications system, the image having been generated as part of
8　a transaction at a point of sale; and

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9        crediting an account of the presenter for funds in accordance with the financial

10    instrument.

1        31.    The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein

2    the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer

3    system for transmitting the electronic package to a second institution for recovery of the

4    funds.

1        32.    The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein

2    the image is stored at a location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a

3    reference to the location, the computer-readable program further including instructions for

4    retrieving the image from the location.

1        33.    The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein

2    the financial instrument comprises a check.

1        34.    A computer system comprising:

2    a communications system;

3    a storage device;

4    a processor in communication with the communications system and the

5    storage device; and

6    a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-

7    readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing

8    operation of the computer system to process a financial instrument, the computer-readable

9    program including:

10    instructions for receiving an electronic package defining an image of

11    the financial instrument from a presenter with the communications system, the image having

12    been generated as part of a transaction at a point of sale; and

13    instructions for crediting the presenter for funds in accordance with the

14    financial instrument.

1        35.    The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the computer-

2    readable program further includes instructions for transmitting the image of the financial

3    instrument to a second institution for recovery of the funds.

1        36.    The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the image is stored at
2  a location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the
3  location, the computer-readable program further including instructions for retrieving the
4  image from the location.

1        37.    The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the communications
2  system is adapted for connection with the Internet.

1        38.    The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the financial
2  instrument comprises a check.